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COMMITTEE AGAINST TORTURE

Seventh session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 88th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Monday, 11 November 1991, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. VOYAME

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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The CHAIRMAN declared the session open and welcomed members.

2. Mr. MARTENSON (Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights), welcoming the members to the seventh session of the Committee against Torture, said that, since the Committee's last session in April 1991, the number of States that had ratified or acceded to the Convention had increased from 55 to 61. The new States parties were: Cyprus, Estonia, Israel, Nepal, Venezuela and Yugoslavia. During the same period, the number of declarations made by States parties under articles 21 and 22 of the Convention had also increased. Two States parties, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Yugoslavia, had made declarations under the two articles, thus bringing the total number of declarations under article 21 to 28 and the total of declarations under article 22 to 27.

3. With regard to other optional provisions under the Convention, Israel had made reservations on articles 20 and 30 of the Convention at the time of its ratification, while the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics had withdrawn its reservation relating to article 20 and the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic had withdrawn its reservation relating to article 30, paragraph 1.

4. Concurrently with the Committee's present session, the General Assembly was holding its forty-sixth session in New York and its Third Committee was about to begin consideration of issues relating to torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment under agenda item 98, which concerned human rights questions. The Third Committee had before it, inter alia, the fourth annual report of the Committee submitted to the General Assembly in accordance with article 24 of the Convention. The General Assembly's resolutions relevant to the implementation of the Convention and the work of the Committee would be brought to the attention of the members at the next session.

5. Commenting on the relevant aspects of the Secretary-General's latest report on the work of the United Nations (A/46/1), he said that the Secretary-General had strongly reaffirmed the close connection between human rights and peace. The shift in public attitudes and the growing international interest in universalizing a regime of human rights reflected a more focused awareness of one of the requirements of peace. It was beyond question that the violation of human rights imperilled peace, since human rights had now become one of the keystones in the arch of peace. While recognizing the persistence of a gulf between human rights aspirations and what he termed "the barbaric realities of the world in which we live", the Secretary-General had cautioned against belittling the positive results already achieved, including the development of procedures for the discussion by the Commission on Human Rights and the various treaty monitoring bodies of human rights problems and violations. Noting that much had already been done to lay the foundations of a universal culture of human rights, the Secretary-General had said that the increased awareness of human rights that had now become pervasive around the globe was due, in no small measure, to the thought and work devoted to that cause by the United Nations and those who had drawn inspiration from it.

6. The Secretary-General had also discussed at some length the question of the relationship between human rights and national sovereignty, noting that "the principle of non-interference with the essential domestic jurisdiction of States" could no longer be regarded as a protective barrier behind which "human rights could be massively or systematically violated with impunity".

7. He believed that the members of the Committee would share his deep sense of satisfaction at the emphatic reaffirmation by the Secretary-General of the vital role of human rights in international affairs and would take his comments as encouragement for the Committee's future endeavours.

8. Outlining some events directly related to the Committee's activities under the Convention that had taken place since the last session, he said that Mr. Kooijmans, the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on questions relating to torture, had continued to receive information relevant to his mandate emanating from various sources, in particular, Governments and non-governmental organizations. He had also brought information concerning allegations of torture to the attention of the Governments concerned and requested them to provide him with explanations and comments. In cases where fears had been expressed that persons might be subjected to torture while they were in custody, the Special Rapporteur had sent urgent appeals to the Governments concerned, requesting them to respect the physical and psychological integrity of the detained persons. Since April 1991, the Special Rapporteur had taken urgent action and sent such appeals in some 30 cases.

9. At the beginning of November 1991, the Special Rapporteur had started a two-week visit to Indonesia and East Timor at the invitation of the Government. He would meet Government officials, members of the judiciary, representatives of non-governmental organizations and also relatives of alleged victims of torture. Information on the Special Rapporteur's activities would be reflected in detail in his annual report to the Commission on Human Rights at its forty-eighth session, which would be available to members at the Committee's next session.

10. With regard to activities relating to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, during its tenth session, held in Geneva from 17 to 26 April 1991, the Board of Trustees of the Fund had examined information concerning 104 projects. The data included analyses of narrative reports, financial reports and audits relating to the use of grants made in previous years, as well as requests for continuing assistance and for new projects. The Board had also heard 21 representatives of organizations which were responsible for implementing 28 of those projects.

11. The Board had recommended to the Secretary-General that 72 new grants should be made from the Fund for various projects and subprojects to be carried out in some 40 countries. The total grants recommended for 1991 and 1992 amounted to approximately US$ 2.3 million.

12. As in the past, the focus of the Board's recommendations had been on supporting programmes providing direct medical, psychological, social or other assistance to torture victims and their family members. The Board had also

recommended support for training programmes for health professionals on the techniques of treatment of victims of torture, as well as for meetings of health professionals, where they could compare experiences.

13. In addition, the Board had recommended that the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 should set aside some time to meet as a pledging conference for United Nations voluntary funds, such as the Fund for Victims of Torture. The Board had felt that the World Conference would provide an excellent opportunity for member States to translate their policies and intentions in the field of human rights into concrete financial terms by pledging a contribution to such funds.

14. The Working Group of Experts appointed by the Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights pursuant to Commission resolution 1991/42 and entrusted with the task of investigating cases of detention imposed arbitrarily or otherwise inconsistently with relevant international standards had held its first session in Geneva from 16 to 20 September 1991. Mr. Louis Joinet had been elected Chairman/Rapporteur of the Group. While the first session of the Working Group had been devoted mainly to the examination of the scope of its mandate and its methods of work, the Group had also considered a number of cases of alleged arbitrary detention and had taken action in 11 of them by addressing letters on the subject to the Governments concerned. In addition, the Group had prepared a questionnaire requesting appropriate information and explanations concerning allegations of arbitrary detention from non-governmental organizations particularly active in assisting persons deprived of their liberty. The next session of the Working Group was scheduled for 16 to 20 December 1991 and the Group would submit a report on its activities to the Commission on Human Rights at its next session in February 1992. That report would also be made available to the members of the Committee at the next session.

15. At the last session of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities in August, Mr. Theo van Boven, the Sub-Commission's Special Rapporteur, had submitted a progress report on the right to restitution, compensation and rehabilitation for victims of gross violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The report referred, inter alia, to the decisions adopted by the Committee under article 22 of the Convention with regard to the three communications submitted by the relatives of deceased victims of torture in Argentina. The Sub-Commission had requested the Special Rapporteur to submit a second progress report in 1992 and to present a final report, including a set of conclusions and recommendations, in 1993.

16. Another question of direct interest to the Committee was the work which was being done on the elaboration of an optional protocol to the Convention against Torture within the framework of the Commission on Human Rights and which the Committee had discussed at its last session. The Commission on Human Rights had decided to defer consideration of the draft optional protocol until its next session, in February 1992, in order to give States an opportunity to study it. At a meeting on the draft optional protocol organized by a group of non-governmental organizations with the support of the Government of Costa Rica on 25 October 1991, members of Permanent Missions had

had an opportunity to raise many questions about the text and the authors had stressed that the draft provided a basis for discussion and could be further elaborated in a working group of the Commission.

17. Reporting on other recent developments and activities of interest in the human rights field, he said that the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on Human Rights had been successfully held in Geneva during the second week of September 1991. The meeting had been devoted largely to procedural matters. As would be seen from its report (A/CONF.157/PC/13), the Preparatory Committee had decided, inter alia, to propose to the General Assembly that the World Conference should be held in Berlin for a period of two weeks in 1993 and that the Preparatory Committee should hold three further sessions - two more during 1992 and the last one in 1993. The Preparatory Committee had also suggested that the Secretary-General should be requested to prepare a limited number of short analytical studies and to prepare or update the main reference documents and publications. The Committee had reaffirmed that the chairmen of the treaty bodies or their designated representatives should take an active part in the work of the Preparatory Committee and the World Conference. Ms. Christine Chanet, who had represented the Committee against Torture, had made a valuable statement at the meeting and would certainly be reporting to the members on the Preparatory Committee's first session in due course.

18. The first session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child had been held during the first three weeks of October 1991. The Committee had been able to complete action on a number of key organizational matters, including the adoption of its rules of procedure and the reporting guidelines for initial reports. It had also considered its future methods of work under the relevant provisions of the Convention and explored the role and potential contribution of the various cooperating agencies and organizations in that regard. The Committee on the Rights of the Child planned to hold its second session from 28 September to 9 October 1992 and had expressed the wish that, in future, it should be able to hold at least two sessions a year, preceded by a pre-sessional working group. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, which had entered into force only on 2 September 1990, had already received a record 100 ratifications or accessions.

19. Concerning the activities of the advisory services programme of the Centre for Human Rights, he said that the Centre had recently organized or helped to organize several workshops or training courses, including a workshop on human rights instruments and reporting obligations in Moscow in August 1991, to which Mr. Burns had made a valuable contribution; a national workshop for Supreme Court judges in September 1991 in Bucharest; and a meeting on national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights in Paris in October 1991.

20. Before the end of 1991, the Centre was planning to hold a national training course on international standards in the field of human rights and national legislation in Ulan Bator, Mongolia; the Centre had helped to redraft the Constitution of Mongolia and to translate human rights documentation into Mongolian. A workshop on regional human rights arrangements for Asian and Pacific countries had been held in Jakarta and another was scheduled in Chile in December 1991.

21. He assured the Committee of the continued readiness of the Centre to assist it in every possible way in carrying out its important duties and wished it every success in its work at the present session.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (item 1 of the provisional agenda) (CAT/C/15)

22. The agenda was adopted.

SUBMISSION OF REPORTS BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 9 OF THE CONVENTION (agenda item 3) (CAT/C/5 and Add.16, 25, 26, 27 and 28; CAT/C/7 and Add.7, 11, 12 and 13; CAT/C/9 and Add.6, 7 and 8; CAT/C/12 and 14)

23. Mr. BRUNI (Secretary of the Committee) drew attention to the information on the submission of reports by States parties contained in the annotations to agenda item 3 (CAT/C/15) and to documents CAT/C/5, 7, 9 and 12. The latter four documents contained the lists of States parties whose initial reports had been due in 1988, 1989, 1990 and 1991, respectively.

24. As far as the reports due in 1988 were concerned, 27 initial reports had been requested and 24 had already been submitted to the Committee. Afghanistan had submitted its initial report in December 1990, but the Permanent Mission of Afghanistan in Geneva had later requested the secretariat not to submit the report to the Committee before the Government of Afghanistan had indicated whether it wished to amend it. A reminder concerning the submission of the report had been sent by the secretariat to the Mission of Afghanistan on 26 September 1991 and, on 4 November 1991, the Mission had indicated that a new text of the report would be prepared.

25. In accordance with rule 65 of the rules of procedure and the Committee's decisions concerning the non-submission of reports, five reminders had been sent to States parties that had not yet submitted their initial reports due in 1988. The latest reminder was dated 15 August 1991. Reports had not yet been received from Uganda and Togo. In the meantime, the initial report of Luxembourg had been received on 15 October 1991 and would be included in the Committee's work programme for its next session.

26. As to reports due in 1989, 10 reports had been requested and 8 already received. Three reminders had been sent to Guyana and Peru, respectively, but their reports had not yet been submitted.

27. With regard to the submission of reports due in 1990, 11 initial reports had been requested, but 5 had not yet been received by the secretariat, namely, those of Brazil, Guinea, Italy, Poland and Portugal. In accordance with the Committee's decision, reminders had been sent to States parties whose reports were over a year late, namely, Italy, Poland and Portugal. A second reminder had recently been sent to Italy and Portugal.

28. The Committee would recall that, at previous sessions, it had decided to invite a number of States parties whose initial reports had already been considered to submit additional information or an additional report in accordance with rule 67, paragraph 2, of the rules of procedure. Additional information had been requested from seven States and additional reports from seven others. Reminders had been sent to the States concerned.

29. To date, four reminders had been sent to the Government of Denmark, since the additional information requested had not yet been received. The additional report of China requested by 31 December 1990 had not yet been received and a reminder had been sent to the Government of China on 15 August 1991.

30. None of the initial reports to be submitted in 1991 had yet been received. In a communication dated 6 June 1991, the Government of Paraguay had stated that it intended to prepare and submit its report shortly.

31. Of a total of 54 initial reports requested from member States since June 1988, 16 had not yet been received.

32. The CHAIRMAN said that the situation with regard to the submission of reports was far from catastrophic: if reports due in 1991 were excepted, only nine reports had not been submitted. In the case of additional reports or additional information requested from States parties under rule 67 of the rules of procedure, the only additional report overdue was that of China and only Denmark had not submitted additional information. The secretariat regularly sent reminders to States parties whose reports were overdue and, although that was usually effective, the Committee had begun at its previous session to consider what additional steps it could take to persuade States parties to submit their reports on time. He requested Mrs. Klein-Bidmon to inform the Committee of the procedure followed in that regard by the other human rights treaty bodies.

33. Mrs. KLEIN-BIDMON (Representative of the Secretary-General) said that even the human rights treaty bodies which had been in existence for many years experienced problems with the timely submission of reports by States parties. As a result, a variety of procedures had been adopted to deal with the problem. One measure taken by the Human Rights Committee and by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination was to follow up a note verbale from the secretariat by a letter from the Chairman of the Committee to the Minister for Foreign Affairs reminding him of his country's obligations and requesting that the overdue report should be submitted without delay. The Human Rights Committee also established direct contact with the permanent representatives of the States parties concerned in order to ascertain whether they were experiencing any particular difficulties in preparing their reports and to offer the technical assistance of the Centre for Human Rights in solving such problems. That approach had been very successful.

34. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination perhaps had the greatest problems with overdue reports and had decided to adopt another approach in order to deal with them. The Chairman of the Committee sent a letter to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of a country whose report was long overdue, informing him that, at its next session, the Committee intended to consider the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in his country, on the basis of the reports and any other information available to it. Governments were naturally invited to provide any other information they might wish to submit and to send a representative to the Committee's session. At its previous session in August, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination had considered the situation with regard to the implementation

of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in 11 countries. A twelfth country had requested the Committee to postpone consideration of its case until the following session and had undertaken to submit a new report. In 10 of the 11 other cases, the situation had been considered in the absence of a representative from the State party, while, in the eleventh case, the country had sent a representative and had subsequently submitted an official request for technical assistance from the Centre for Human Rights.

35. The problem of overdue reports could also be brought to the attention of each meeting of States parties to the Convention, which could be requested to take the necessary action. Moreover, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination had adopted a recommendation concerning technical assistance for States parties and had asked the Secretary-General to organize seminars on the preparation of reports, with the assistance of experts from the Committee and of the Centre for Human Rights.

36. Mr. SORENSEN suggested that the Committee should follow the approach adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination: if a report was long overdue, it could announce its intention to consider the country's situation with regard to the Convention against Torture, with or without an up-to-date report. It might include the question of the situation in countries whose reports had been overdue since 1988 on the agenda for its next session. An additional step would be to draw attention to the issue of overdue reports at the press conference to be held during the current session and the press could also be urged to attend public meetings and could be informed in advance which reports were to be examined at a given meeting.

37. The CHAIRMAN said that he endorsed Mr. Sorensen's suggestion concerning the press conference. It should, however, also be noted that a press release containing the relevant information was issued by the Information Service several days before the beginning of each session.

38. Mr. DIPANDA MOUELLE said he agreed with the Chairman that the situation with regard to the submission of reports was not catastrophic. The Committee was still in its early stages and it might not be advisable to adopt radical measures such as those proposed by Mr. Sorensen. The Committee might simply follow up a reminder sent by the secretariat by a letter to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and a direct approach to the country's permanent representative. The measures advocated by Mr. Sorensen could be restricted to countries whose reports were long overdue, in which case the Committee could also make use of the press.

39. Mr. GIL LAVEDRA said that, in relative terms, the situation with regard to the submission of reports was better than in other Committees. He was concerned mainly about the countries whose reports had been overdue since 1988. The human rights conventions represented a voluntary commitment by States parties to fulfil a number of obligations and, in particular, to submit reports to the relevant Committees. A failure to submit reports was a failure to comply with those commitments and extreme delay in submitting a report might be tantamount to a violation by the State party of its treaty obligations.

40. He suggested that the Committee should adopt graduated measures in dealing with States whose reports were overdue and that it should first of all increase the frequency of its reminders before sending a letter to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the country concerned, as suggested by Mr. Dipanda Mouelle. In the case of States whose reports had been overdue since 1988, however, more drastic measures might be required.

41. The CHAIRMAN said that Uganda and Togo were the only two States in that category. In the case of other countries, the Committee would be well advised to take a soft line, although he doubted whether it would serve any purpose to increase the frequency of reminders, which were already sent every six months. It might be better if he wrote to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the country concerned and transmitted the letter to the country's permanent representative as well. That procedure might apply to States whose reports were two years overdue. The Committee's press conference could also be used to draw attention to such States. In the case of States whose reports were four years overdue, the Committee might take the more drastic measures proposed by Mr. Sorensen.

42. Mr. GIL LAVEDRA said that the procedure adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in respect of countries whose reports were long overdue might be further refined by the adoption of a statement by the Committee against Torture that failure to submit a report by a final deadline would be regarded as a violation of the Convention against Torture. He doubted whether the Committee could consider the situation in a country ex officio, in the absence of any report.

43. Mr. SORENSEN suggested that the Committee might make use of rule 62 of its rules of procedure concerning the submission of information. That rule provided that the Committee might invite United Nations specialized agencies, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council to submit to it information, documentation and written statements, as appropriate.

44. The CHAIRMAN said it was true that the Committee would be legally justified, on the basis of articles 20, 21 and 22 of the Convention, in considering the situation in States parties on the basis of information received rather than on the basis of reports. However, the question whether the Committee was in fact competent to deal with the situation of countries which had not submitted reports and in respect of which there was no basis for taking action under articles 20, 21 and 22 should perhaps be clarified.

45. Mrs. KLEIN-BIDMON (Representative of the Secretary-General) said that, in the case of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, action was taken only once a report had actually been submitted to the Committee and the Committee had informed the Government concerned that it would be considering how it was implementing the Convention on the basis of that report and on the basis of other information. However, the Committee had never taken such a step in the case of States which had not submitted any report.

46. Mr. DIPANDA MOUELLE said that the Committee could not investigate the situation of a State party in a vacuum; its practice had always been to cooperate with States parties. If no report had been submitted, he did not see how the Committee would be able to operate; indeed, any action in such circumstances would be outside the Committee's terms of reference.

47. Mr. BURNS said he agreed that, according to the Committee's jurisdiction as defined by the Convention, it was not entitled to deal with States whose reports it had not received. While it was entitled to make a strong statement to a State party that it was in breach of its obligations under the Convention, it could not itself seek out information on that State and, on that basis, arrive at a favourable or unfavourable conclusion. The Committee would be on very uncertain ground if it were to initiate any such action unilaterally. The point made by Mrs. Klein-Bidmon was an important one: the task of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination was simply to act on the basis of information contained in reports submitted to it.

48. The Committee against Torture was thus in a difficult position vis-à-vis States parties whose initial reports, due in 1988, had not yet been received. The most it could do was to indicate to them in the strongest possible terms that, in its view, they were clearly in breach of their obligations under the Convention.

49. Mr. SORENSEN said he still maintained that use could be made of rule 62 of the rules of procedure, which allowed the Committee to determine the form and the manner in which information could be made available to it. Information thus received could be discussed at one of the Committee's meetings and the account of that discussion in the summary records would then be reflected in its annual report to the General Assembly. While it could not of course deal with the country concerned directly, it could deal with it indirectly under an agenda item which might be entitled: "Material requested and received under rule 62 of the rules of procedure".

50. Mr. GIL LAVEDRA said that, as he saw it, rule 62 had nothing to do with the matter under discussion. That rule gave the Committee the option of requesting information "... relevant to activities of the Committee under the Convention". The option of seeking such information derived from the Convention, not from the rules of procedure. Under the Convention, the Committee was not automatically competent to consider the situation of any given country; it was competent to do so only in relation to specific articles of the Convention, namely, articles 19, 20, 21 and 22.

51. Mr. BURNS said that he fully shared that view. It was clear from rule 62 that the Committee's jurisdiction stemmed from the Convention and that it could not use the leverage of its rules of procedure to claim some other jurisdiction to which it was not entitled. Where reminders had proved ineffective, the best solution would be to exercise some form of moral persuasion by means of a press conference, at which the Committee could make a public statement that the States concerned had not complied with the Convention. Those States would then either respond or not respond; there was no way of forcing them to comply with obligations which they had voluntarily assumed.

52. Mr. KHITRIN said he agreed that some form of pressure had to be exerted on States whose reports were as much as three years overdue. At the same time, the situation of such States could be considered only once their reports had been submitted. There were only two possible solutions: a letter from the Chairman or the adoption by the Committee of some form of resolution stating that it found the State concerned to be in breach of its obligations under the Convention.

53. The CHAIRMAN said he agreed that, for the Committee to be justified in taking action, there was no middle way between the consideration of reports submitted and the initiation of specific inquiries, as provided for in article 20 of the Convention.

54. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee decided that, following the sending of reminders, the first measure should be a letter from the Chairman, addressed to the permanent representative of the country concerned in Geneva and conveyed to its Foreign Minister. If there was no reply to that letter, the Committee could then adopt some kind of resolution, noting and regretting that the State concerned was not complying with the obligations it had freely assumed. That resolution would be forwarded to the State concerned and also made public both in the Committee's report and in the press.

55. It was so decided.

56. The CHAIRMAN said that, in the case of Uganda and Togo, whose reports had been due in 1988, it would seem unreasonable to expect that an initial report and a first periodic report should be submitted virtually simultaneously. He suggested that, for those States, the two reports could be submitted in a single document. The same procedure could be followed in the case of Afghanistan, unless that country's report was received within the next few months.

57. It was so decided.

ORGANIZATIONAL AND OTHER MATTERS (agenda item 2)

58. The CHAIRMAN said that, in the absence of Ms. Chanet and Ms. Diaz Palacios, the Committee would need to appoint new country rapporteurs and alternate country rapporteurs. He himself was willing to act as country rapporteur for Cameroon. He called for volunteers to serve as alternate country rapporteurs for Cameroon and Bulgaria.

59. Mr. GIL LAVEDRA volunteered to act as alternate country rapporteur for Cameroon.

60. Mr. BURNS volunteered to act as alternate country rapporteur for Bulgaria.

61. Mr. Gil Lavedra and Mr. Burns were appointed alternate country rapporteurs for Cameroon and Bulgaria, respectively.

62. The CHAIRMAN called for volunteers to serve as country rapporteur and alternate country rapporteur for Uruguay.

63. Mr. GIL LAVEDRA volunteered to act as country rapporteur for Uruguay.

64. Mr. DIPANDA MOUELLE volunteered to act as alternate country rapporteur for Uruguay.

65. Mr. Gil Lavedra and Mr. Dipanda Mouelle were appointed country rapporteur and alternate country rapporteur for Uruguay, respectively.

66. The CHAIRMAN noted that the initial report of Luxembourg would be considered at the Committee's session in April 1992. He called for two volunteers to serve as country rapporteur and alternate country rapporteur for that country.

67. Mr. MIKHAILOV volunteered to act as country rapporteur for Luxembourg.

68. Mr. SORENSEN volunteered to act as alternate country rapporteur for Luxembourg.

69. Mr. Mikhailov and Mr. Sorensen were appointed country rapporteur and alternate country rapporteur for Luxembourg, respectively.

70. The CHAIRMAN noted that Ms. Chanet and Ms. Diaz Palacios, who had represented the Committee at the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on Human Rights in September 1991, were not offering to do so again. He therefore called for volunteers to replace them.

71. Mr. SORENSEN volunteered to act as representative.

72. Mr. MIKHAILOV volunteered to act as alternate representative.

73. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, pending a final decision, the Committee should note that Mr. Sorensen and Mr. Mikhailov had offered to represent the Committee at the next session of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference. Ms. Chanet would be asked to give a brief report on the meeting she had attended on her arrival.

74. It was so decided.

75. The CHAIRMAN reminded members that rapporteurs had been appointed to follow up the work of six other human rights treaty bodies. Was it the Committee's wish that all those rapporteurs should report back to it automatically or only when they had something to communicate that was of particular relevance to its work?

76. Mr. BURNS said that he had nothing to report, since he had never received any documentation concerning the meetings of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

77. Mr. SORENSEN said that he had not yet received any of the reports of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, but that might well be because that Committee's first session had ended only in September.

78. In his view, the submission of reports on the work of other treaty bodies should be made a specific item on the Committee's agenda: it should not be left to the rapporteur concerned to decide whether or not to make a report.

79. Mr. DIPANDA MOUELLE urged that any unnecessary burden of work should be avoided. The rapporteurs should report only when they considered that they had something useful to communicate.

80. Mr. SORENSEN said that he agreed with that view.

81. Mr. BRUNI (Secretary of the Committee) said the secretariat had done everything it could to ensure that members received the necessary documentation to follow up the work of other related Committees. All the reports of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights had been dispatched to Mr. Burns in June or July. He would investigate to determine whether any obstacles had been encountered in that regard.

82. The CHAIRMAN said that the rapporteurs who had received the necessary documentation would thus report to the Committee at its current session, but only if they considered it useful to do so. Other reports could be submitted at a later session.

The public meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.